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ABSTRACT

Each confidential statement about a student teacher by his teacher supervisors should be written with one goal in mind, that of offering a candid assessment of a teacher candidate who is being considered for employment by a hiring official. Amidst the current trend toward pass/fail courses, these statements assume an even higher importance. There are numerous criteria one can apply in such an assessment. The following are cited as illustrations: a) the situation (school setting, educational philosophy of community, social and economic characteristics); b) teaching experience; c) extra-Academic initiative; d) personal interaction; e) appearance and social demeanor; f) preparation versus production; g) cautious versus curious (mention any innovative ideas the student teacher may have implemented, especially if they were less than successful but worthwhile for the expended effort); h) receptive to suggestions; i) strengths; and j) deficiencies and attitudes toward correction. (JA)

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YOUR STUDENT TEACHER'S FINAL EVALUATION

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YOUR STUDENT TEACHER'S FINAL EVALUATION

Perhaps the least attractive aspect of supervising student teachers comes with organizing the written final evaluation which most teacher preparation institutions require as part of the laboratory experience.

Teachers are generally compassionate people by nature, wanting to see and develop the most positive characteristics of their students. These conscientious people are well aware of the permanency of confidential statements in the credentials file of teaching candidates. This awareness frequently induces them to prepare evaluations which offer little insight about the candidate while utilizing a great number of words, ranging from kindly to neutral by implication.

Conversely, hiring agents need every available assistance in determining the suitability of selecting one candidate over another. As more teacher preparation programs offer student teaching on a pass/fail basis, and in light of the increasing number of candidates available, the final evaluative statement assumes increasing importance.

Each confidential statement should be written with one goal in mind, that of offering a candid assessment of a teacher candidate who is being considered for employment

by a hiring official. There are numerous criteria one might apply in the assessment of student teachers with the following cited as illustrations:

THE SITUATION. A brief analysis of the school setting is most appropriate to quickly familiarize a potential employer with the environmental fundamentals. Noted here could be rural, suburban, inner-city types; social and economic characteristics of the district; the educational philosophy of the community, such as traditional, innovative, or liberal; and size of the student population in the school where student teaching occurred.

TEACHING ASSIGNMENT. Since student teaching assignments vary widely for a variety of reasons, provide hiring agents with a capsule description of your student teacher's experience. Always worthy of note are subjects taught, age and ability level of students, class size, if significant, and any experience with team teaching in flexible scheduling situations. In this latter context you should mention the adaptability of the student to the technique, capacity for teamwork and contributions which enhanced the team effort.

EXTRA-ACADEMIC INITIATIVE. New staff members on a faculty are frequently expected to assume some responsibilities for co-curricular activities. Indicate any initiative or involvement which your student teacher assumed in aiding activity sponsors, coaches, or others outside the classroom setting. Worthy of mention also is attendance at faculty or departmental meetings, observing the school board

in regular session, attendance at local educational association meetings, and even voluntary involvement in community affairs if such occurred.

PERSONAL INTERACTION. In this category one might note the student teacher's degree of acceptance by the faculty and student body, expecially those with whom frequent association was possible or scheduled. Was he shy or withdrawn, aggressive or "pushy" in relating to regular staff? Did he assume the "buddy" role with students, or nicely balance a friendly manner with a professional posture? Did he bother to learn the names of his students in class and those of faculty with whom there was frequent exposure? Was he invited to participate in faculty gatherings as an equal? Did students seek out his company for their activities?

APPEARANCE AND SOCIAL DEMEANOR. Although many schools today are dispensing with student dress codes, such liberality for the teachers will likely come more slowly. Was the student teacher neat, well-groomed, and conscious of standards for attire practiced among your faculty? Did the student teacher reflect good judgment in personal dress and grooming? Would you judge your student teacher to have generally acceptable standards of social behavior such as good manners, social sensitivity, conversational capabilities with staff members, and an awareness of role to name a few examples.

PREPARATION VERSUS PRODUCTION. Each of us has encountered the teacher who is full of knowledge and yet lacks the ability to motivate students through exposition. Did the

student teacher communicate with the class or to them? Were there competencies demonstrated to organize and relate subject matter to pupils, or was the information provided clearly beyond the comprehension of students in class? Perhaps your student teacher was working in an area on the fringe of, or beyond, his preparation. In fairness to all concerned, this must be indicated. Even if excellent results were achieved in terms of the final grade, students teaching beyond their competencies by preparation are not justly evaluated unless this circumstance is noted. If your student teacher exerted exceptional effort, either to compensate for deficiencies or to enrich previously acquired skills and depth of preparation, offer your insight and judgment as to the degree of success which resulted.

CAUTIOUS VERSUS CURIOUS. As a general rule, student teachers seem more eager to innovate, to experiment or to gamble during their student teaching experience than at any later time in their careers as professionals. Be certain to mention any innovative ideas implemented by your student teacher, especially if they were less than successful, but the student, after careful analysis, decided there was merit in the effort expended. Conversely, in the event your student teacher did not volunteer any new ideas or approaches, perhaps self-evaluation on your part is desirable. Did you encourage the student's initiative or did your manner inhibit his natural desire to experiment?

RECEPTIVITY TO SUGGESTIONS. Assuming that you conferred at regular intervals with your student, offering written

observations about his progress and performance, did he exhibit a positive attitude toward your suggestions? Did you notice personal or methodological adjustments as a result of your proffered comments? Were you aware of his soliciting the opinions of other staff members on problems appropriate to their area of expertise? Was his overall attitude positive or negative, even neutral, regarding comments on his teaching performance?

ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTHS. All potential employers are interested in assessments of an applicant's strongest points in reference to the position sought. Detailed explanations are not necessary, but specific characteristics should be cited such as: (a) excellent daily and unit planning; (b) classroom management and control quite adequate; (c) rapport with students and staff nicely balanced - accepted equally by both; (d) sound command of subject matter; (e) eager, willing, and cooperative; (f) punctual, reliable, and responsible; (g) alert to the proper use of the English language; (h) interested in the learner; (i) conscious of individual differences among students and successful in adapting to them.

DEFICIENCIES AND ATTITUDE TOWARD CORRECTION. As previously stated, teachers are inclined to emphasize the positive and ignore the negative when writing statements assessing their student teachers. Since "perfect people" are rather scarce these days, even if they earned the letter grade of "A" in student teaching, the hiring agent deserves to know your opinion of a candidate's weakness(es). His particular staff

needs may be met by your student teacher and your insight offers him the option of hiring an attractive candidate whose deficiencies may be corrected by in-service counseling or training. The two-year period prior to tenure in Illinois assumes greater value when correctable habits or insufficiencies are readily identified, treated, and open to correction from the outset.

OVERVIEW. The attached evaluation grid may prove helpful in placing the student teacher in context with many of the competencies which are demanded for optimum classroom performance. After evaluating the student teacher for each categorical listing, a pattern of his performance should emerge to help sharpen your overall assessment of his efforts and productivity. The categories are not of equal value and should not be treated as such.

CONCLUSION. Each supervisor of student teachers performs a valuable service to his profession, and to the student teacher himself when a written confidential statement is conscientiously executed. Today, with an overabundance of teacher candidates in many areas, the statement of assessment you offer may well assure that a district will hire highly motivated applicants, who are the best qualified and most appropriate for the positions available. Good luck and happy supervision!

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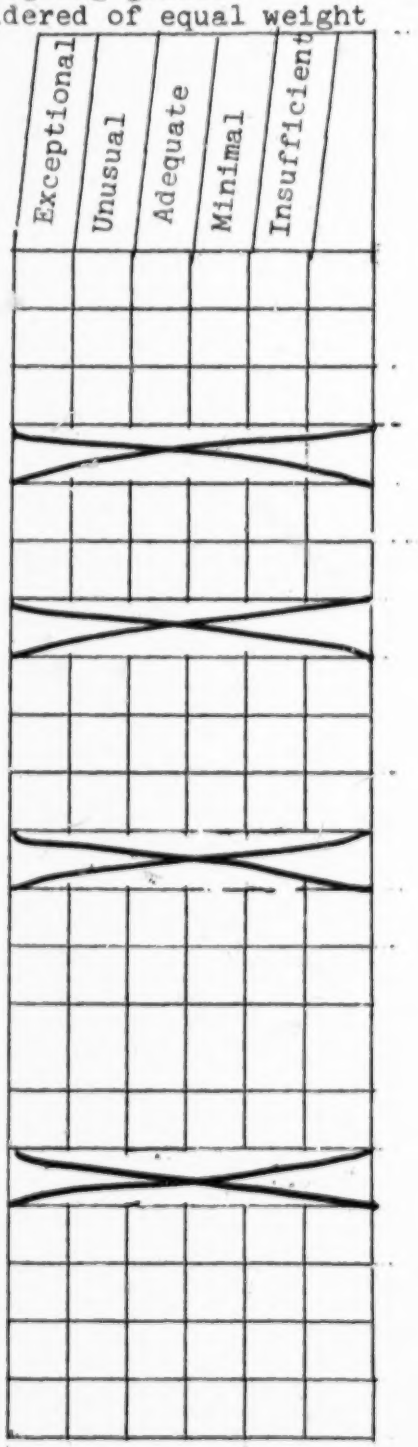
STUDENT TEACHING EVALUATION GRID

This grid is a condensed version of the evaluation criteria found on pages 32, 33, 34, and 35 of the I.S.U. Student Teaching Handbook. Supervisors may wish to utilize it for developing a composite of their student teachers prior to assigning grades. Items in the five categories should not be considered of equal weight to one another.



I. PREPARATION AND PLANNING FOR INSTRUCTION

- A. Preparation
- B. Planning
- C. Evaluation of Pupil Progress

II. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

- A. Relationship with Pupils
- B. Relationship with Faculty and Staff

III. ESTABLISHING THE CLIMATE FOR LEARNING

- A. Physical Facilities
- B. Motivational Activities
- C. Pupil Participation

IV. INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

- A. Understanding the Learner
- B. Adaptability
- C. Command of Subject Content and Teaching Material
- D. Performance in Teaching

V. PERSONAL AND PHYSICAL QUALITIES

- A. Physical and Mental Health
- B. Attitudes and Character
- C. Voice and Language Usage
- D. Interest and Initiative